What to watch our for when working with artists or performers

There are several areas where you should be careful when working with artists or performers:

- Be careful not to make verbal commitments before you have all your information. Your group will be responsible for any fees to which you agree.

- Ask for a copy of the rider(s) before agreeing to anything. Be sure that you can fulfill all elements of the hospitality and technical riders before you commit.

- Think of the hidden costs that might come on top of the fee (such as food, lodging, and equipment rental). All extra costs are also multiplied by the number of band members or performers.

Good luck and have a great event!

Some information in this brochure was taken from the following sources:

Bransdorf, L. & Gross, T. “Contracting Made Simple: Keeping the headaches out of contracts, riders, and negotiations.” *Campus Activities Programming*, 1996, (9), 52-55


More resources for student organizations are available at the CLSI office, O’Connor Campus Center. Call or visit any time.
Guide to Contracting

Student organizations are responsible for negotiating with artists and performers with their CLSI advisor. The CLSI staff should have a role in preparing you for contract negotiations, and the contracts ultimately must be signed by the director. If the artist or performer does not provide a contract, we can give you copies of a generic contract to use for your event.

Why sign a contract?

Contracts are legally binding documents that outline the agreement reached between two parties. The contract is the articulation of the expectations for a given appearance and is ultimately the tool by which you prepare for the event. Skillful contract negotiations can eliminate unnecessary or unrealistic commitments. Further the negotiation process can help you to maximize the potential outcome and reach of an event as well as preventing potential problems and miscommunication.

What should I know about negotiating?

- Research the artist before making the first call. What travel requirements are expected? What is their reputation; do they have references? Do they have a promotional packet with a CD or video?
- Know your calendar before you call. Also, make sure you have a venue reserved. Start talking specifics slowly instead of jumping into a contract and having to change the date several times.
- Know your budget before calling. Do not commit if you are unsure of your budget – ensure that you have met with the BAC and have received notification of your budget.
- Do not reveal your budget if asked. This is your leverage. The best way of asking for prices is to ask the agent for the range of offers that are considered by the artist. You can always negotiate down from there.
- In most cases, be prepared to deal with an agent or promoter instead of the artists or performers themselves.
- You can make requests regarding changes to the contract, but be reasonable.
- Ask many questions. Clarify as much as you need to be fully informed and to prevent miscommunication. Be clear and precise.
- Be honest about financial and logistical limitations, your group decisions about an artist or performer, etc. Keeping the agent informed helps him or her have an idea of where you stand and how they can help you.
- Practice phone courtesy with the other party. Return all calls promptly, even if you are letting them know you will not be using their services. You have an effect on Colgate’s reputation with agents.
- Remember: You are in control of this process! Don’t feel like you are being bullied. You’re paying them.

What should I know about contracts?

The face of the contract lists the services (who, when, how long, where), the considerations (how much money is to be paid, how it will be paid, and when it is to be paid), and signatures of both parties.

The contract rider, when signed by both parties, is as legally binding as the original contract. The rider outlines additional terms and details of your agreement.

The technical rider details specific technical needs for the performance. Read this carefully before signing and be sure that you can actually accommodate their needs (such as stage size, lights, and sound). If you need to make substitutions, be sure to clear it with the performer. Remember that both you and the artist or performer can attach riders to the contract. Do not feel pressure to meet ridiculous rider requests, but do let them know before signing that you don’t have time to pick out all the red M&Ms from the bowl.

The sponsor rider can detail your needs such as volume levels, and book signings.

Changing a contract is simple, but be sure to follow some basic guidelines. Discuss any proposed changes to the contract or rider with the artist or performer. If both parties agree to the change, cross out each section that is being deleted. Clearly print additions or changes in the margin. Initial and date each change. If you add a sponsor rider, write “School rider attached is made a part of this contract” at the top of the original contract. The other party must also initial and date changes upon receipt of the new changes. It is best to work with your CLSI advisor with such changes and additions.